

# New Treatment at the Gateway Institute | Ablative Fractional Laser Treatment

Fractional laser treatments (where lasers treat just a fraction of the skin's surface) have been extremely successful at improving skin texture, minimizing scars, and reducing stubborn pigmentations. Recent refinements in fractional laser technology (called ablative fractional laser treatment) make the technology even more exciting. Ablative lasers actually remove microscopic tubules of skin, while leaving the surrounding area untreated, thereby allowing the skin to heal more quickly. (A slightly discomforting analogy might be to think of ablative laser treatments as lawn aeration. Tiny plugs are selectively removed, thereby enhancing the overall health and appearance of the remaining surface.)

How do ablative treatments compare to standard fractional treatments and laser resurfacing? Let's take a look.

Certainly laser resurfacing (laser peel) treatments remain the most effective alternative when it comes to removing aged, wrinkled, scarred, pigmented and sagging skin. Ablative treatments follow in second place; and standard fractional laser treatments come in third, based on improvement noticed per treatment.

Shouldn't everyone choose laser resurfacing then, since it's the most effective? Not exactly. While resurfacing offers the most noticeable results, it also requires the most downtime—one to two weeks. Hence the reason for the positive buzz surrounding new ablative treatments. While they are not quite as effective as laser resurfacing peels, the associated downtime is just 2-4 days before makeup can be applied. Skin may stay red or discolored for two weeks or more after treatment, but downtime reduction is significant.

While regular fractional treatments are the least effective of the three, there is no downtime at all, only redness and mild swelling.

In addition to downtime,

it's also important to consider the number of treatments you will need to achieve the desired results. Laser resurfacing requires just one treatment for maximum results. Ablative treatment requires one, perhaps two, depending on the conditions being treated. Traditional fractional treatment requires approximately five spaced treatments to reach maximum effectiveness (but with no downtime).

Which treatment is right for you? In truth, there is a place for each, depending on skin condition, desired results, and recovery schedules. Ablative treatments are exciting because they offer greatly reduced downtime over laser resurfacing. However, all of these technologies, if used correctly, can give excellent improvement in skin texture, and significantly reduce wrinkles, scars, prominent pores and other skin irregularities.

At the Gateway Aesthetic Institute & Laser Center we have all three options available—standard fractional lasers, ablative fractional lasers, and traditional laser resurfacing. (We just purchased the leading edge Fraxel Repair laser.) In a private consultation, we can discuss your goals and how best to achieve them with a skin treatment that is perfect for you. ©



Before ablative laser treatment and then 8 weeks after treatment.